Library Leader Interview: Donna Canas

Clarissa P. Moreno

University of Southern California

LIM 500: Fundamentals of Library and Information Science

Dr. Christopher Stewart

5 October 2020

Library Leader Interview: Donna Canas

Serving a student body of over nineteen thousand for the 2020-21 school year, Chaffey College, a public community college, has three campuses located in Rancho Cucamonga (Rancho), Chino, and Fontana, California. Within all three campuses lies a library with the same mission to "support the mission of Chaffey College by providing instruction, guidance, and services promoting information literacy; access to quality information resources; and assessment to measure and evaluate its effectiveness. Through multiple access points, the library promotes and supports student success in a learning-centered environment" (About the Library). I had the opportunity to interview Donna Canas, Lead Library Technician for the Chaffey College Library of twelve years, to discuss her leadership, the organization, and its structure.

In order to support the Chaffey College mission in providing access to information resources to students, we must also consider those working behind the scenes. Those who "manage the content of a library and make sure the library and all of its many services continue to operate properly and effectively" (Haycock and Romaniuk, 2018, p. 62). To identify Donna's leadership within the organization, it is important to first define what leadership is. Haycock and Romaniuk (2018) state that leadership "involves an ever-present and ever-changing process where the individual [makes] connections with and influence[s] followers to not only become leaders to create a shared, distributed, collected and connected capacity and achieve results in [the] organization" (p.85), believing that it extends beyond the individual to the profession as a whole.

Working for the Chaffey College Library, Donna is also an employee to the district which she must collaborate wit to ascertain a budget for the library. Donna along with the

Library Faculty Coordinator and Dean created the **VIP Goals and Assessment for Adopted Budget Book - Library and Learning Resources** (VIP Goals). Within this document, they have listed the primary goals and objectives for the libraries which include:

> A. *Extend equity of access to library services to better meet the needs of the Chino, Fontana, and Distance Education communities.*
>
> B. *Formulate collection management strategy to improve the suitability of Library resources for current Chaffey programs*.
>
> C. *Modify library spaces to support the capacity for collaborative learning and intellectual engagement.* (VIP Goal, 2019).

The team organization of the Chaffey College Library allows for the objectives to be reached by having specialists for specific subjects to create programs and activities, or in Donna's case, heading the technical services department to ensure the acquisition of quality information resource materials both for specific programming and general student use. The definition of these programs and materials needed by the library to meet the VIP Goals "match justification content" (Todaro, 2014, p.167) to the District who then establishes the budget.

While the District establishes the budget for each department, the funding for the school is provided by the State of California. Proceeds from the state lottery, property tax revenue, other specific grants, and voter-approved bond measures, i.e., Measure P, also help to fund the district then disperses funds among the departments, thus allowing the library to have both discretionary and non-discretionary funds available - depending on the category. Donna believes that having come to the college with a Bachelor of Science in Economics and a background in accounting has been extremely beneficial when transitioning from library clerk to the lead role in technical

services. For in this role, she oversees the budget for the library, dispersing funds (that have been established by the college) for the acquisition of materials both physical and digital to support students visiting the library either in person or through Distance Education. Given the available funds, the department then collectively determines the percentages assigned to specific collections. However, operations and capital are set forth by the district.

In addition to establishing the library's budget, the library is governed by the district and Dean. With some autonomy from the Dean, library faculty and staff work together in a team-based structure. Haycock and Romaniuk, state the structure of most libraries is reflecting change, opting for the team-based structure, as we see taking place at the Chaffey College Library, where the district and the dean have delegated responsibilities to the employees trusting that with their team, they are able to problem-solve efficiently and have some input and control over the work that is being done within the department (p.105). Centrally, on the "front lines," the faculty coordinator deals with student conflict, while Donna oversees student workers.

While there is quite a bit of autonomy within the Chaffey College Library, human resources for the district oversees the hiring of the full-time and part-time employees for the library, with the exception of short-term and student workers. Apart from the student workers, the Chaffey College Library employs six full-time professional librarians to every six and a half support (classified) staff. However, with technical services requiring more bodies to keep the library running from behind the scenes, student workers are hired to fill in where full-time and part-time employees cannot, the work they do within the library lending to their financial aid. The hiring and training of these student workers have been delegated to Donna. Human resources trusting her leadership role within technical services, finding her capable of effectively hiring workers with the skill set and values equal to those of the library and the district.

The Chaffey College Library organization is comprised of a professional team that works to provide the best services and resources that support the educational goals of both the library and the district. Donna found that to successfully lead a team that supports the mission and values within Chaffey College's organization, the most important qualities are communication, collaboration, and the ability to acquire and apply knowledge. In speaking with her and learning her values on what it means to be a leader, I could only think of Brooke Sheldon's definition of leadership as provided by Haycock and Romaniuk: "leadership is a process whereby an individual motivates a group of people or an entire organization to achieve shared goals" (p.86).

Reference

About the Library (2019). Retrieved from https://libguides.chaffey.edu/about Bond Measures (2019). Retrieved from https://www.chaffey.edu/facilitiesdevelopment/bonds.php

Haycock, K. & Romaniuk, Mary-Jo. (2018). *The portable mlis: Insights from the experts (2nd ed.).* [Kindle Edition]. Libraries Unlimited.

Todaro, Julie. (2014). *Library management for the digital age: A new paradigm.* Rowman & Littlefield. https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/socal/detail.action?docID=1711466

VIP Goals and Assessment for Adopted Budget Book – Library and Learning Resources (2019). Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/document/d/1iTrglNwM5qznQ2gEpeqQlyngPmZ-FHHcQF9C1bKsEMo/edit